

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for providing notification to a user of
an interactive television system, the apparatus comprising:

5 a customer premise equipment capable to receive
information from a data communication network and transmit
an alert signal in response to receiving the information;
and

10 a notification device capable to receive the alert
signal and to provide notification to a user in response to
the alert signal.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the customer premise
equipment includes a set top box.

15 3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the notification
device comprises a remote control device.

20 4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the received
information includes an electronic mail.

5. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the received
information includes an instant message.

6. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the notification includes a light signal from the notification device.

7. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the notification
5 includes a sound signal from the notification device.

8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the notification includes vibration from the notification device.

10 9. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the alert signal is capable to penetrate a wall or barrier.

10. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the customer premise equipment includes a transmitter capable to transmit the
15 alert signal.

11. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the notification device includes a receiver capable to receive the alert signal.

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12. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the notification device is capable to transmit a control signal that permits execution of an application for processing the received information.

13. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the customer premise equipment includes an application capable to detect the received information.

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14. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the customer premise equipment includes an application capable to display the received information.

10 15. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:

a display device communicatively coupled to the customer premise equipment and capable to display the received information.

15 16. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the notification device is communicatively coupled to the customer premise equipment by a wireless link.

17. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the notification
20 device is communicatively coupled to the customer premise equipment by a wired link.

18. The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the wired link is cable wiring.

receiving, by a customer premise equipment,

in response to the received information, sending an alert signal to a notification device; and

in response to the alert signal, providing
notification by the notification device about the received

21. The method of claim 19 wherein the customer premise equipment includes a set top box.

22. The method of claim 19 wherein the notification device comprises a remote control device.

23. The method of claim 19 wherein the received information includes an electronic mail.

24. The method of claim 19 wherein the received
information includes an instant message.

5 25. The method of claim 19 wherein providing notification
comprises:

providing a light signal from the notification device.

10 26. The method of claim 19 wherein providing the
notification comprises:

providing a sound signal from the notification device.

27. The method of claim 19 wherein providing the
notification comprises:

15 providing vibration from the notification device.

28. An article of manufacture, comprising:

a machine-readable medium having stored thereon
instructions to:

20 receive, by a customer premise equipment, information
from a data communication network;

in response to the received information, send an alert
signal to a notification device; and

in response to the alert signal, provide notification
by the notification device about the received information.

29. An apparatus for notifying a user of an interactive
5 television system, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving information from a data
communication network;

communicatively coupled to the receiving means, means
for sending an alert signal in response to the received
10 information; and

communicatively coupled to the receiving means, means
for providing notification about the received information
in response to the alert signal.

15 30. An apparatus for providing notification to a user of
an interactive television system, the apparatus comprising:

a customer premise equipment capable to receive
information from a data communication network and transmit
an alert signal in response to receiving the information,
20 the customer premise equipment including a set top box
capable to process the received information;

a notification device capable to receive the alert
signal and to provide notification to a user in response to
the alert signal; and

a display device communicatively coupled to the customer premise equipment and capable to display the received information;

wherein the customer premise equipment includes an
5 application capable to detect the received information, and an application capable to display the received information;

wherein notification is provided by using at least one signal from a group of signals comprising a light signal, a sound signal, and a vibration signal.

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31. An apparatus for providing notification to a user of an interactive television system, the apparatus comprising:

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a customer premise equipment capable to receive information transmitted from a data communication network, the customer premise equipment capable to transmit an alert signal in response to receiving the information;

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a notification device capable to provide control signals to control the customer premise equipment, the notification device capable to receive the alert signal and process the alert signal to generate a notification related to the received information; and

a display device communicatively coupled to the customer premise equipment and capable to display the received information;

wherein the customer premise equipment includes an application capable to detect the received information, and an application capable to display the received information;

wherein notification is provided by using at least one
5 signal from a group of signals comprising a light signal, a sound signal, and a vibration signal.

32. A method of notifying a user of an interactive television system, the method comprising:

10 receiving, by a customer premise equipment, information from a data communication network, and storing the received information;

in response to the received information, sending an alert signal to a notification device;

15 receiving and processing the alert signal; and

based upon the alert signal, providing notification by the notification device about the received information;

wherein notification is provided by using at least one
signal from a group of signals comprising a light signal, a
20 sound signal, and a vibration signal.